Complete Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A reinforced pallet assembly comprising:

a first pallet deck having a first outer member and a first intermediate member, each having a one of a first pair of mating cross-rib surfaces which are mounted together to define a first plurality of box-beam sections within the first pallet deck;

a second pallet deck having a second outer member and a second intermediate member, each having a one of a second pair of mating cross-rib surfaces which are mounted together to define a second plurality of box-beam sections within the second pallet deck;

at least one reinforcement member disposed between the second outer member and the second intermediate member for providing stiffness thereto; and

a plurality of columns extending between the first intermediate member and the second intermediate member.

2. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 1, wherein the first and second pallet decks and columns comprise a plastic material and wherein the at least one reinforcement member comprises a metal material.

3. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 1 wherein the columns include a first column portion projecting from the first intermediate portion, and a second column portion projecting from the second intermediate portion and attached to the first column portion.

4. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 1 wherein the second pallet deck is defined by a unitary construction comprising a plurality of peripheral rail members and at least one cross-rail extending between a pair of peripheral rail members.

5. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 4 wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed within the at least one cross-rail of the second pallet deck.

6. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 4 wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed within the peripheral rail members of the second pallet deck.

7. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 1 wherein the first pallet deck further comprises a second reinforcement member disposed between the first outer member and the first intermediate member which is oriented generally perpendicular to the at least one reinforcement member.

8. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 1, wherein the first pallet deck includes a second reinforcement member disposed therein extending substantially along a central axis thereof.

9. (Original) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 1, wherein the second pallet deck includes a channel within which the at least one reinforcement member is disposed.

10. (Original) A pallet assembly, comprising:

a first pallet member having a first pallet surface including a first plurality of cross-rib members;

a second pallet member disposed adjacent the first pallet member and having a second pallet surface including a second plurality of cross-rib members corresponding to the first plurality of cross-rib members, the first and second plurality of cross-rib members being secured together to form a first pallet deck, the second pallet member further including a mating surface opposite the second pallet surface;

a first reinforcement member disposed between the first and second pallet members along a first axis thereof;

a third pallet member disposed adjacent the second pallet member and having a third pallet surface including a third plurality of cross-rib members, the third pallet member having an other mating surface opposite the third pallet surface;

a fourth pallet member disposed adjacent the third pallet member and having a fourth pallet surface including a fourth plurality of cross-rib members corresponding to the third plurality of cross-rib members, the third and fourth plurality of cross-rib members being secured together to form a second pallet deck;

a second reinforcement member disposed between the third and fourth pallet members along a second axis thereof oriented substantially perpendicular to the first reinforcement member; and

a plurality of column portions extending between the second and third pallet members.

11. (Original) The pallet assembly of claim 10 further comprising other reinforcement members extending proximate the periphery of the second pallet member.

12. (Original) The pallet assembly of claim 11 wherein the first reinforcement member and other reinforcement members are integrally formed to define a unitary construction.

13. (Previously Presented) The pallet assembly of claim 10 wherein the mating surface of the second pallet member and the other mating surface of the third pallet member are secured together to define the plurality of column portions.

14. (Original) A reinforced pallet comprising:

a top deck having a top deck upper surface, a top deck lower surface, and a plurality of upper box beam sections disposed between the top deck upper and lower surfaces;

a bottom deck having a bottom deck upper surface, a bottom deck lower surface, and a plurality of lower box beam sections disposed between the bottom deck upper and lower surfaces, the bottom deck further including at least one elongate reinforcement member disposed therein; and

a plurality of columns extending between and attached to the top deck and bottom deck.

15. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14 wherein the top deck includes first column portions projecting downwardly therefrom, and the bottom deck includes corresponding second column portions projecting upwardly therefrom corresponding to and securely mating with the first column portions to define the plurality of columns.

16. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14 wherein the bottom deck includes a peripheral deck rail and at least one cross-rail extending therebetween.

17. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 16 wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed within the at least one cross-rail of the bottom deck.

18. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 16 wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed within the peripheral rail of the bottom deck.

19. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14 wherein the top deck includes at least one other elongate reinforcement member disposed therein and oriented along an axis generally perpendicular to the at least one elongate reinforcement member.

20. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14, wherein the top deck includes an other reinforcement member disposed therein and extending substantially across a central axis thereof.

21. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14 wherein the top deck includes a top member and a mid-top member each having mating corresponding top deck rib members which define the plurality of upper box beam sections, and further including a second reinforcement member disposed between the top member and mid-top member and oriented generally perpendicular to the at least one reinforcement member.

22. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14 wherein the bottom deck includes a bottom member and a mid-bottom member each having mating corresponding bottom deck rib members which define the plurality of lower box beam sections, wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed between the bottom member and mid-bottom member.

23. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14, wherein the bottom deck includes a channel within which the at least one reinforcement member is disposed.

24. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 14, wherein the at least one reinforcement member has an I-beam cross-section.

25. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim14, wherein the upper box beam sections and the lower box beam sections are defined by a plurality of rib members within each of the top and bottom decks.

26. (Previously Presented) A reinforced pallet comprising:

a top deck having a top deck upper surface and a top deck lower surface spaced apart from each other and oriented substantially parallel to each other, the top deck further including a first plurality of rib members extending between the top deck upper and lower surfaces;

a bottom deck having a bottom deck upper surface and a bottom deck lower surface spaced apart from each other and including a second plurality of rib members extending between the bottom deck upper and lower surfaces;

at least one longitudinally extending reinforcement member disposed between the bottom deck upper and lower surfaces; and

at least one column member extending between the top deck lower surface and the bottom deck upper surface and attached therebetween.

27. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 26, wherein the top deck lower surface includes at least one first column portion projecting downwardly therefrom, and wherein the bottom deck upper surface includes at least one second column portion extending upwardly therefrom and mating with the first column portion to define the at least one column member.

28. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 26 wherein the top deck includes a top member having a first surface corresponding to the top deck upper surface and a first opposed surface defined by rib members, the top deck further including a mid-top member having a second surface corresponding to the top deck lower surface and a second opposed surface defined by rib members, such that first opposed surface and the second opposed surface are attached to define the first plurality of rib members extending therebetween.

29. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 26 wherein the bottom deck includes a bottom member having a first surface corresponding to the bottom deck lower surface and a first opposed surface defined by rib members, and a mid-bottom member having a second surface corresponding to the bottom deck upper surface and a second opposed surface defined by rib members, such that the first and second opposed surfaces are attached to define the second plurality of rib members extending therebetween, and wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed between the bottom member and the mid-bottom member.

30. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 26 wherein the bottom deck includes a peripheral rail and at least one bottom deck cross rail extending therebetween.

31. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 30 wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed within the at least one bottom deck cross rail.

32. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 30 wherein the at least one reinforcement member is disposed within the peripheral rail of the bottom deck.

33. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 26, wherein the top deck includes a second reinforcement member disposed therein and extending substantially across a central axis thereof.

34. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 26, wherein the top deck includes a second reinforcement member disposed therein and oriented generally perpendicular to the at least one reinforcement member.

35. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 26, wherein the bottom deck includes a channel within which the at least one reinforcement member is disposed.

36. (Original) The reinforced pallet of claim 26, wherein the at least one reinforcement member has an I-shaped cross section.

37. (Currently Amended) The reinforced pallet assembly of claim 26, wherein the bottom deck upper surface includes a plurality of second column portions extending upwardly therefrom and mating with a plurality of first column portions extending downwardly from the top deck lower surface to define a plurality of columns between the top deck and the bottom deck ~~second and third members~~.

38. (Previously Presented) The pallet assembly of claim 26 further comprising a pair of reinforcement members extending around a periphery of the top deck, wherein the pair of reinforcement members are oriented substantially parallel to each other.

39. (Previously Presented) A reinforced pallet assembly, comprising:

a first member having a first lower surface defined by a plurality of downstanding cross-rib members;

a second member having a second lower surface and also including a second upper surface defined by a plurality of upstanding cross-rib members corresponding to the downstanding cross-rib members of the first member and mounted therewith;

a third member spaced apart from the second member, the third member having a third upper surface and a third lower surface defined by a plurality of downstanding

cross-rib members, the third upper surface and the second lower surface having corresponding flanged surfaces securely mounted to each other to form a plurality of columns;

a fourth member having a fourth upper surface defined by a plurality of upstanding cross-rib members corresponding to the downstanding cross-rib members of the third member and mounted therewith; and

a reinforcement member disposed between the third member and fourth member for providing strength thereto.

40. (Cancelled)

41. (Previously Presented) A pallet assembly comprising:

a first pallet member having a first surface defined by a first plurality of cross-rib members;

a second pallet member having a second surface defined by a second plurality of cross-rib members which are mounted to the first plurality of cross-members to define a first pallet deck;

a third pallet member mounted to the second pallet member by a plurality column portions extending therebetween, the third pallet member having a third surface defined by a third plurality of cross-rib members;

a fourth pallet member having a fourth surface defined by a fourth plurality of cross-rib members which are mounted to the third plurality of cross-rib members; and

at least one elongate reinforcement member disposed between the third and fourth pallet members within a corresponding channel formed in at least one of the third and fourth surfaces for providing stiffness thereto.

42. (Original) The pallet assembly of claim 41 further comprising an other elongate reinforcement member disposed between the first and second pallet members.

43. (Currently Amended) A reinforced pallet ~~assembly~~ comprising:

a first deck having an upper surface;

a second deck having a lower surface;

a plurality of columns between the first deck and the second deck;

a first cross-bar reinforcement member and a first pair of peripheral reinforcement members between the upper surface of the first deck and the plurality of columns, the first pair of peripheral reinforcement members at opposite axial ends of the first cross-bar reinforcement member; and

a second cross-bar reinforcement member and a second pair of peripheral reinforcement members between the lower surface of the second deck and the plurality of columns, the second pair of peripheral reinforcement members at opposite axial ends of the second cross-bar reinforcement member.

44. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 43 wherein the first cross-bar reinforcement member is perpendicular to the second cross-bar reinforcement member.

45. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 44 further including a third pair of peripheral reinforcement members generally perpendicular to the second pair of peripheral reinforcement members.

46. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 45 wherein opposite axial ends of the third pair of peripheral reinforcement members are adjacent opposite axial ends of the second pair of peripheral reinforcement members.

47. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 43 wherein the columns include cross-ribs generally perpendicular to a plane defined by the upper surface of the first deck.

48. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 47 wherein the first cross-bar reinforcement member abuts upper edges of the cross-ribs of at least one of the columns.

49. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 48 wherein the first pair of peripheral reinforcement members abut upper edges of the cross-ribs of the columns and wherein the second pair of peripheral reinforcement members abut lower edges of the cross-ribs of the columns.

50. (Currently Amended) The reinforced pallet of claim 43 wherein the first cross-bar reinforcement member is generally along a first central axis of the first deck and wherein the second cross-bar reinforcement member is generally along a second central axis of the second deck, the first cross-bar reinforcement member perpendicular to the second cross-bar reinforcement member, and wherein the pallet does not include a reinforcement member between the upper surface of the first deck and the columns generally along a second central axis of the first deck generally perpendicular to the first central axis of the first deck, and wherein the pallet does not include a reinforcement member between the lower surface of the second deck and the columns generally along a first central axis of the second deck generally perpendicular to the second central axis of the ~~second deck~~ second deck.

51. (Previously Presented) The reinforced pallet of claim 43 wherein the first deck and the second deck are plastic and the reinforcement members are metal.